



**Grand View Elementary  
Room Parent Handbook  
2016/17**

1. SCHEDULE MEETING WITH YOUR TEACHER: As soon as the Room Parent Coordinator notifies you that you have been selected to be a Room Parent you should schedule a short meeting with your teacher to discuss expectations and volunteer needs in your particular classroom. It is important that this initial meeting take place *before* the grade level meeting (a meeting of all Room Parents and teachers in your grade level), and this meeting should focus on classroom specific activities. All teachers have preferences about how much, and what kind of participation they request from their Room Parent. Please follow your teacher's lead. You should be proactive throughout the school year by continuing to ask your teacher if she needs your assistance with anything.

Some topics to discuss during your one-on-one teacher meeting:

- \* What type of communication works best for the teacher, email, phone, drop-by visits?
- \* Would it be okay if you handled creating and distributing to the families in your class a contact list? See the forms section for a Word version template that you could give to your teacher. Many teachers collect this information and would be happy for the Room Parent to handle creating and distributing the list.
- \* Give your teacher the opportunity to tell you how she/he works best with a Room Parent. Some teachers have very specific plans that they would like the Room Parent to implement, and others appreciate the Room Parent taking the initiative to plan parties/activities within teacher provided guidelines.

- \* Does the teacher have any classroom specific activities (separate from any grade level activities) planned for the year, and what does the teacher expect from you in regard to these?
- \* What field trips (if any) will the class take, and what does the teacher expect from you in regard to these field trips?
- \* Does the teacher want you to assist with scheduling parent volunteers for in-classroom help (i.e., Tuesday folders, math centers, etc.)?
- \* What other assistance does the teacher need?

2. CREATE CLASS CONTACT LIST: Obtaining family contact information early in the school year is extremely helpful in putting together the class contact list. Please note that some teachers like to create their own contact list, or are not aware that a Room Parent will handle this task. Please communicate with your teacher.

- \* The class contact list contains the student's name, home phone, cell phones, address, email address, and parent's name.
- \* When creating the list, and subsequently when you are sending email communications to the class, be cognizant of family situations where the parents do not live together. You should go the extra step of contacting both parents to determine if one or both want to be included on classroom emails.
- \* Please confirm with your teacher that she wants you to handle the class contact list.
- \* Once you obtain all the information, you should send

an email to each family in the class, (making sure to include both parent's name if the parents are not married), attaching the completed class contact list. Your email should instruct each family to respond via email confirming that their email address is correct, the information on the contact list is also correct, and that they approve of their information being distributed to the class.

- \* If someone doesn't respond, you should contact them (via phone or send a note home via the child's backpack) to confirm a correct email address.
- \* Once you have all the correct email addresses, you should create an "email group" on your computer, so that every time you have to send an email to the class you don't have to type in all the email addresses. Please be sure to include both parents email address in situations where the parents don't live together.
- \* Distribute the class contact list to every parent in the class. This class contact list is an especially important tool that is used by the class before the student directory is printed.

3. SCHEDULE AND ATTEND GRADE LEVEL MEETING: Your teacher will let you know when they would like to schedule the meeting of all the Room Parents and teachers in your grade level. The first part of this meeting should focus on what the teachers have planned and their needs. The teachers will discuss specific grade level activities and volunteer needs. The teachers will let you know what parties will be held, and whether they will be celebrated individually in the classroom or celebrated together as a grade. After the teachers have completed their discussion, plan to have a short meeting of just your grade level Room

Parents to discuss the items below:

- \* Discuss collection of the voluntary donation, and estimate expenditures for other class activities/parties. Grand View has a policy regarding the amount of the voluntary donation, and it is based on the number of students in the classroom. For Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, the voluntary donation cannot exceed \$40. For 4<sup>th</sup> grade, the voluntary donation cannot exceed \$50. For 5<sup>th</sup> grade, the voluntary donation cannot exceed \$60.

4. LETTER TO PARENTS: After your grade level meeting, you need to draft and send a letter to the parents of your classroom, which includes the following information:

- \* Introduce yourself as the Room Parent and give your contact information.
- \* Advise what parties, field trips, events, etc. are planned for the school year.
- \* Inform the parents that in order to avoid multiple requests for donations throughout the school year, each class will request a voluntary donation from families in their class at the beginning of the school year. Tell them the donation amount is based on the number of students in the classroom, and state what amount your request is for (based on the policy above). Because there is a broad spectrum of financial circumstances in our community, please let your families know that this is a voluntary donation. DO NOT circulate or share who has contributed to the class fund and who has not. \*\* Please note that this

year, the PTA has simplified the process so that parents will have the option of donating to the class fund online through Greater Gator. Room parents will be given the money collected after the Greater Gator deadline. You will be responsible for collecting any additional class donations that have not been given through Greater Gator.

- \* Include a budgetary breakdown of the estimated costs of the activities/parties, so parents know how the class fund money will be spent.
- \* Attach a copy of the class contact list, letting the parents know that you will be communicating via email. Ask parents to email you with any changes.
- \* Ask the parents to email you if their son or daughter has any food allergies and/or if there are any food or drinks that they are not allowed to have. (This information will be very helpful when planning parties.)

5. CLASS FUND: As you start to collect parent donations for the class fund, you are *required* to:

- \* Create a chart indicating which families have contributed to the class fund. (See Forms Section for an example).
- \* Create a budget indicating what will be spent on parties, activities, gifts, etc. This budget should be updated throughout the year to reflect the actual amount spent. An Excel spreadsheet works well or you can create your own.
- \* You are required to be fiscally responsible for the class fund, making sure that you do not spend more

than you have collected.

- \* You are required to keep receipts for the expenses you incur.
- \* At the end of the year, you are required to submit to the Room Parent Coordinator your budget of actual spent, along with a reconciliation of your class fund.
- \* If you have money leftover, you will need to decide whether to give the parents a reimbursement or give the money to the teacher for classroom items.

6. OPTIONAL MEET-AND-GREET PARTY: Some Room Parents like to plan a get-together for all the families in their class and the teacher at someone's home. This gives the families a chance to meet each other. The PTA will reimburse up to \$50 per class, provided you complete the Grand View PTA Check Request Form (available at [gypta.com](http://gypta.com)) and attach receipts. (The PTA will not reimburse for any alcohol purchases.)

7. MBEF: Starting with the initial fundraising campaign, and continuing throughout the school year, you will be required, as directed by the MBEF site reps, to email parents in your class regarding MBEF fundraising. It is always difficult to ask people to contribute money, so the best way to solicit participation in the MBEF is to always send your email to the entire class. A good example would be to say something like, "MBEF would like every parent to contribute, so if you have not already done so, please donate". You are prohibited from sending emails listing who has contributed and who has not contributed. Email communication can either be to all the parents of the entire class, or to an individual parent. (You may not send an email to only the families from your class that have not

contributed).

8. PTA: All Room Parents are required to join the PTA and attend a minimum of two PTA meetings. In addition, at various times throughout the school year, you will also be required to email parents for a variety of PTA related activities, including getting parents to join the PTA. When asking parents to join the PTA, it is best to send your email to the entire class. A good example would be to say, “the PTA would like every family to join, and thank you to those families that have already done so”. You are prohibited from sending emails listing who has joined and who has not. Again, email communication can either be to all the parents of the entire class, or to an individual parent. (You may not send an email to only the families from your class that have not joined).

#### 9. CLASSROOM PARTIES:

- \* The Manhattan Beach Unified School District has a policy of only TWO parties per school year. The Manhattan Beach Unified School District's food policy can be found on their website and is known as the "Wellness Policy". If a classroom party includes food, the food should be healthy. If a sweet is given, only ONE sweet per student is allowed.
- \* Please do not serve any food with peanuts or other nuts of any kind. Thoroughly read all labels of food brought into the classrooms, and when in doubt serve something else.
- \* The teachers in your grade level will determine when they want to have these two parties.
- \* Please strive to have the same parties within each grade level. (For example, parties for the same

holiday, for the same amount of money, etc.)

- \* Show sensitivity/awareness of special needs of children in the classroom. It is suggested that you send an email to the parents in your class asking if there are any food issues for their child, and then keep a record of any responses. You must be respectful of children who might have food allergies and/or who are not allowed to eat or drink certain items.

#### 10. TEACHER GIFTS:

- \* You are responsible for purchasing on behalf of the class a birthday gift. If the teacher's birthday falls during the summer, consider celebrating her "half birthday". You are also responsible for purchasing a holiday gift, and an end of year gift for the teacher.
- \* Grand View has a policy regarding the amount to be spent on teacher gifts based on the number of students in the classroom. For Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, the maximum amount to be spent is \$50 for a birthday gift, \$100 for a holiday gift, and \$150 for an end of year gift. For 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades, the maximum amount to be spent is \$75 for a birthday gift, \$125 for a holiday gift, and \$200 for an end of year gift.
- \* Before planning any celebration for your teacher's birthday, please get the teacher's prior approval.
- \* It is helpful to confer with your teacher to see what her preferences are in regards to classroom gifts. There are many great teacher gift ideas, including a note complimenting their teaching abilities with a copy sent to the principal for inclusion in the teacher's personnel file, hand-crafted gifts such as memory

books or photo books, gift certificates to restaurants, the theater, musical performances, etc. If you need gift ideas, contact the Room Parent Coordinator.

- \* It is also very helpful to send an email questionnaire to the teacher at the beginning of the year to get to know him/her a little better. This will be helpful to assist you with gift giving. In addition, it would be helpful to distribute the information to the families in your class. (See Forms section for an example.)
- \* If your classroom has an aide, please recognize him/her with a small holiday and end of the year gift. Although, typically the aide is in the classroom to help a specific student, more often than not, the aide becomes part of the classroom and assists all the students and teacher at one time or another.

11. CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS FOR EVENTS: You are responsible for soliciting parent volunteers for help with room parties, field trips, etc. Always confer with the teacher to determine what her needs are before soliciting volunteers. When asking for help:

- \* be specific with all pertinent information, (i.e., can you be at the Halloween party from 1:30-2:30 in the classroom?)
- \* let parents know what is expected of them, (assign them a job.)
- \* send a reminder email the day before the event to make sure volunteers remember what they have agreed to do.

12. TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK: The Room Parent

Coordinator will notify you of the date(s) that Grand View celebrates teacher appreciation, (typically sometime in May). The goal is to let our teachers know how much they are appreciated, while keeping things in perspective and preventing extremes of either “going overboard” or completely forgetting to acknowledge them. You are responsible for coordinating the activities of the week for your classroom.

- \* Our Grand View teachers love to get together to enjoy a meal. The PTA will be catering lunch for our teachers three to five days during the week. In addition, the PTA will also be providing a coffee cart one or two of the days. More information will follow closer to the week.
- \* The second thing that teachers appreciate most during Teacher Appreciation week are gift cards to spas, Amazon, etc. Following are spending guidelines: \$50 for Pre-k thru 3rd and \$75 for 4th and 5th. If you have an aide, please factor that into your budget.
- \* It was also decided that it would be much easier on the parents who have multiple children at the school to have uniform "theme days" across all grade levels. The following “themes” have been decided for each student this year:
  - Monday - Bring your teacher a piece of fruit. The Room Parent or designee would collect the fruit from each child as they come in the door and place them in a basket (purchased with class funds) so that the teacher will have fruit to nosh on all week. Teachers who don't like food in their classrooms can take the basket home.

- Tuesday - Wear your teacher's favorite color.
- Wednesday - Bring a flower for your teacher. The Room Parent or designee will collect the flowers and put them in vases. The flowers can either be store bought or picked from a garden on the way to school. As Room Parent, you may want to buy a simple bouquet (again with class funds) so that children who forget will have a flower to contribute.
- Thursday - Bring a special note for your teacher.
- Friday - The class presents the teacher with a gift card along with a small personal item that the teacher will appreciate (i.e. a class picture, a song sung by the students, a book, a picture, etc.) This is the day to get creative and do something special that your teacher will love!

13. WATER CLASSROOM FLOWER POT: You are responsible for the care and watering of the class flower pot. The PTA spends money beautifying the school with flowers and plants. The Room Parent of each class is required to maintain a regular watering schedule. You are free to delegate this responsibility, but you are responsible for periodic checks to make sure the pot is receiving sufficient watering.

14. TB TEST: All classroom volunteers are required to have a current TB test on record in the school health office. The Manhattan Beach School District requires a TB test once every four years. For convenience, the Care Station at 1010 N. Sepulveda Boulevard, Manhattan Beach (310-376- 6262) offers a TB test for a nominal fee for volunteer parents.